

Qualitative vs Quantitative Research

	Qualitative Research	Quantitative Research
Objective / purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To gain an understanding of underlying reasons and motivations • To provide insights into the setting of a problem, generating ideas and/or hypotheses for later quantitative research • To uncover prevalent trends in thought and opinion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To quantify data and generalize results from a sample to the population of interest • To measure the incidence of various views and opinions in a chosen sample • Sometimes followed by qualitative research which is used to explore some findings further
Sample	Usually a small number of non-representative cases. Respondents selected to fulfil a given quota.	Usually a large number of cases representing the population of interest. Randomly selected respondents.
Data collection	Unstructured or semi-structured techniques e.g. individual depth interviews or group discussions.	Structured techniques such as online questionnaires, on-street or telephone interviews.
Data analysis	Non-statistical.	Statistical data. Findings are conclusive and usually descriptive in nature.
Outcome	Exploratory and/or investigative. Findings are not conclusive and cannot be used to make generalizations about the population of interest. Develop an initial understanding and sound base for further decision making.	Used to recommend a final course of action.